

MEMORANDUM

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June 17, 1961

TO : Mr. McGeorge Bundy
The White House

FROM: Senator Mike Mansfield

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E.O. 11652, SEC. 2(E), 5(D), 5(E) AND 11

Dept. of State (WKK-8-636)
BY mlh NARS, DATE 11/14/78

The basic structure of the memoire seems to me to be sound as far as it goes. It makes a strong legal case for our continued presence in Berlin and our refusal to accept any unilateral changes in the situation. It dramatizes the soundness of this position by the additional and excellent proposal to take the matter, if necessary, to the International Court.

But the crisis which is gathering in Berlin is not so much legal as it is political, with already audible overtones of eventual military action. Since such is the case, it seems to me that we are confronted with two primary tasks:

(1) To leave ourselves with maximum room for diplomatic manoeuvre as the situation continues to develop.

(2) To win the maximum possible public support, not merely in Western Germany, but throughout Western Europe and, most important, at home for whatever military measures might eventually become necessary in the event that diplomacy fails to dissolve the crisis.

It seems to me that in public statements of this kind we will have the best opportunity of advancing both objectives by adhering to the following principles:

(1) We must eschew the "your another" type of provocative and depreciatory phraseology which tends to demean us in the eyes of the world and to give to our state papers a tone of immaturity;

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(2) we must not bind ourselves in advance on paper with the details of our own proposals and, thereby, reduce the room for diplomatic manoeuvre;

(3) we must emphasize to the world that we are not closing any doors to any new solutions even while we stand fast on our present rights and responsibilities.

The suggestions in the draft are made with the above thoughts in mind.

I should like to add this further thought for the President's consideration. It might be worthwhile to suggest to Mr. Khrushchev that we should like to have him arrange, without fanfare, for a high-ranking Russian to meet with Mr. Bohlen, perhaps at the United Nations in New York, for completely private discussions and full exploration of what, if anything, can be done on the basis of our 1959 proposals made at Geneva and Russian ideas to meet this gathering crisis.